

# The (mini) Mental Health Colouring Book



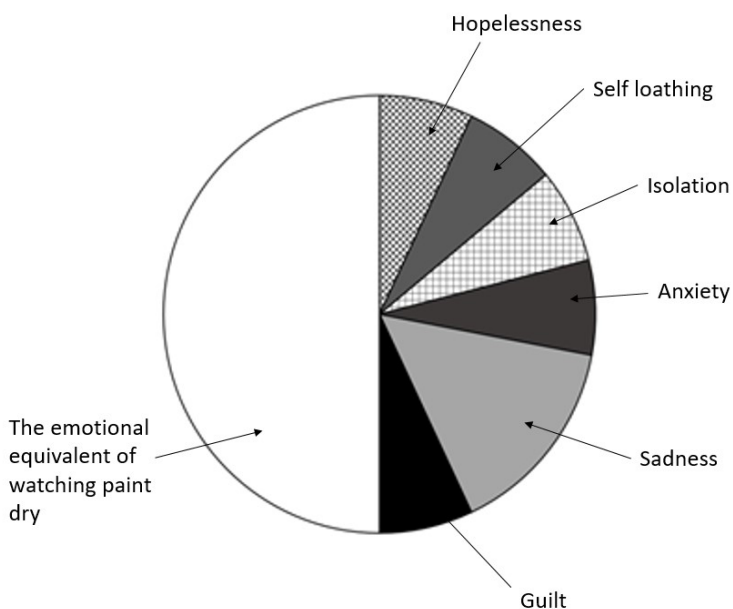
MRC-CBU

Science Festival 2021

# Depression: what people think it feels like versus what it actually feels like

Depression is more than just being sad.

This is what people *think* it feels like



This is what it *actually* feels like (this will range from person to person).

Some people with depression describe their symptoms as **the black dog**. The black dog is a metaphor for something that is keeping you down and never leaving you alone.

The black dog can also represent the importance of training and looking after your mental health, as it is a big responsibility in life!





# **What is happening in the brain when you're experiencing low mood?**

The body and mind undergoes changes to handle low mood. Below are a few examples of what is occurring:

## **The brain requires more energy**

- A healthy brain uses 20% of the energy that is absorbed from food.
- People with low mood often find they have higher levels of fatigue or poor concentration. To restore energy levels quickly, the brain may signal them to snack more. This can lead to unhealthy eating habits.

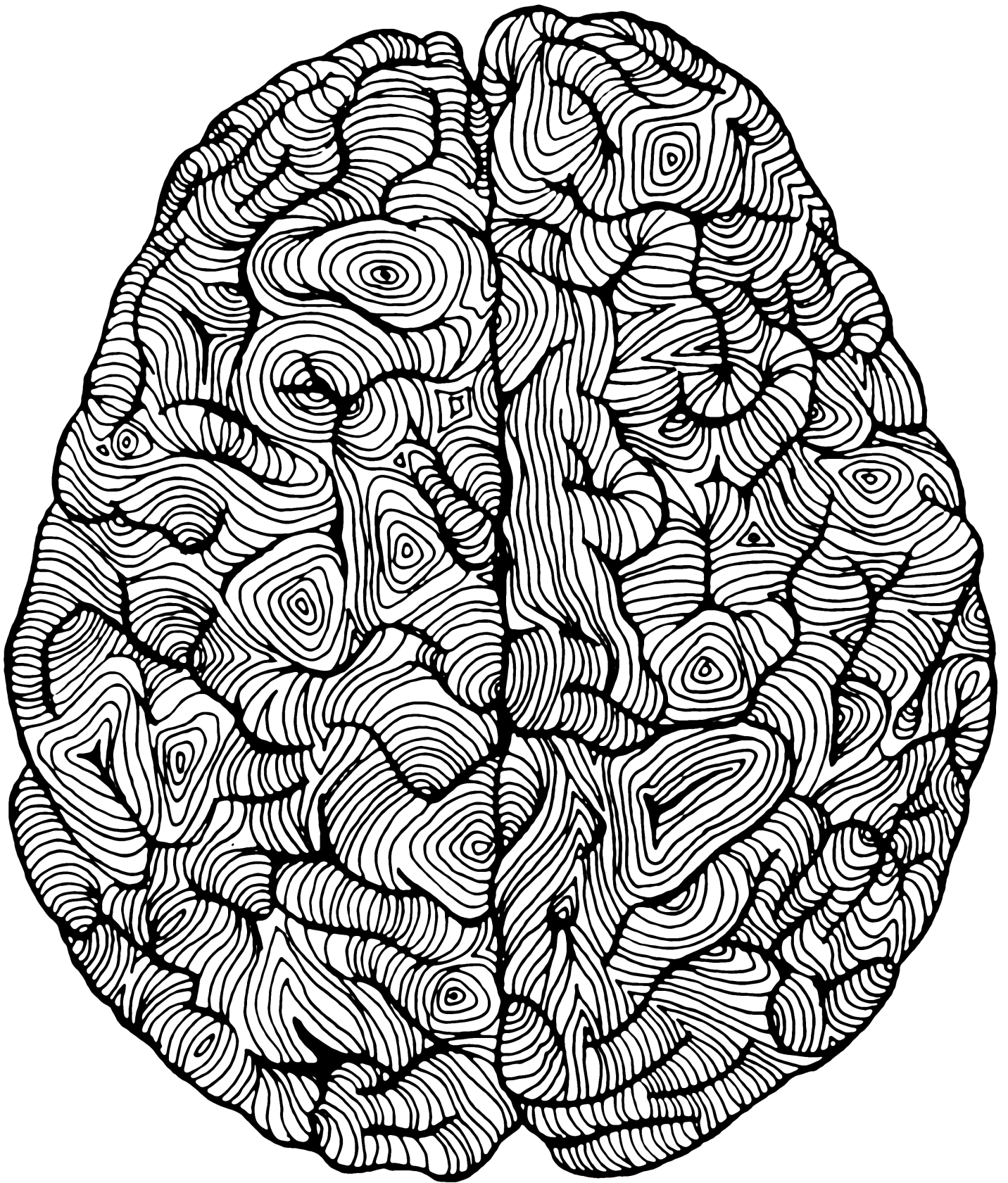
## **When depressed, you think, suffer and reason in search of solutions (this is called 'rumination')**

- Rumination can make it harder for people to sleep as you're thinking of many different things.
- Negative ruminating thoughts can creep in when we question our self worth. This can impact our memory for the positive things in life.

## **A depressed brain generates less chemicals that make you happy and motivated.**

- The scientific term for this neurotransmitter is called 'serotonin'. Serotonin is the 'feel good' chemical that contributes to well-being, good mood and appetite.
- Some antidepressants target serotonin pathways to improve the transmission of messages between neurons.



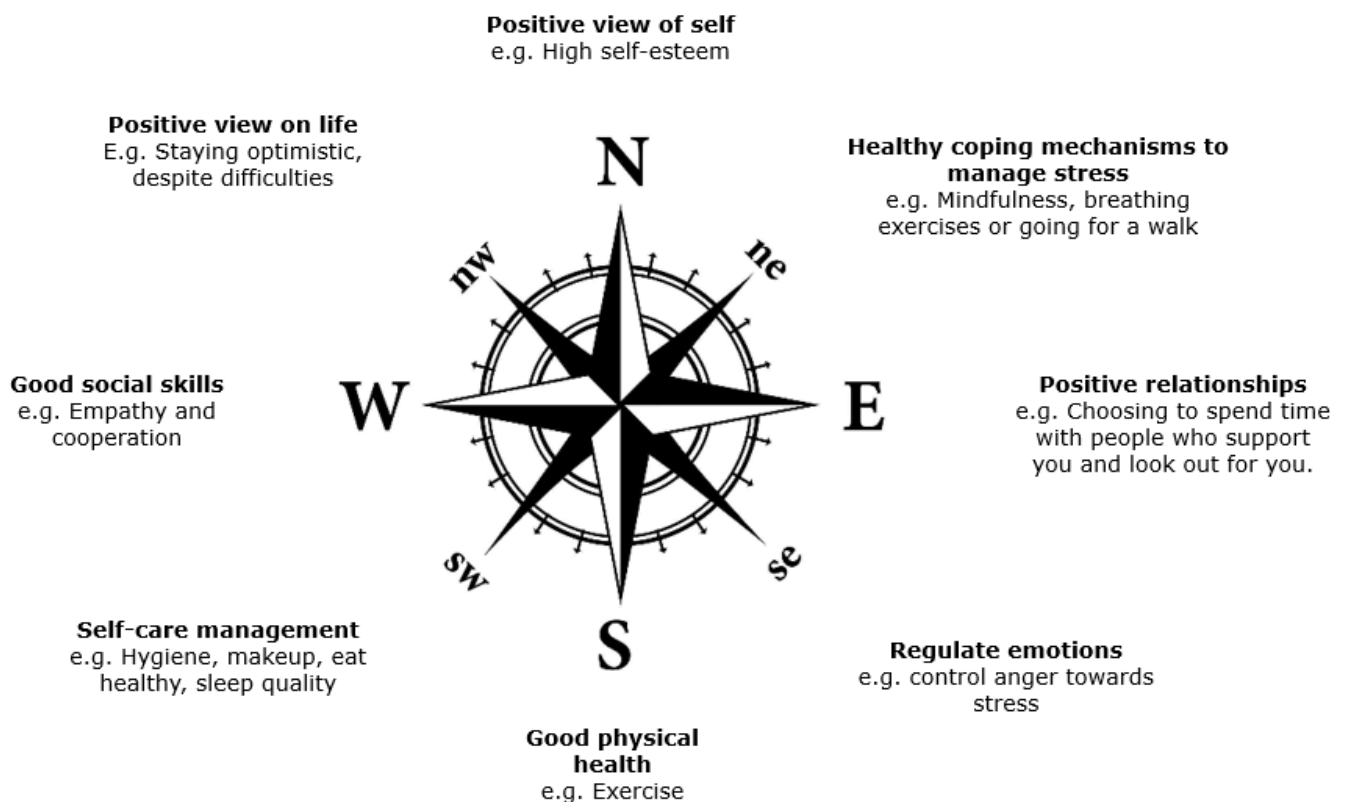


# What is good mental health?

Good mental health can be defined as:

*"A state of well-being that allows you to cope with the normal stresses of life and function productively."*

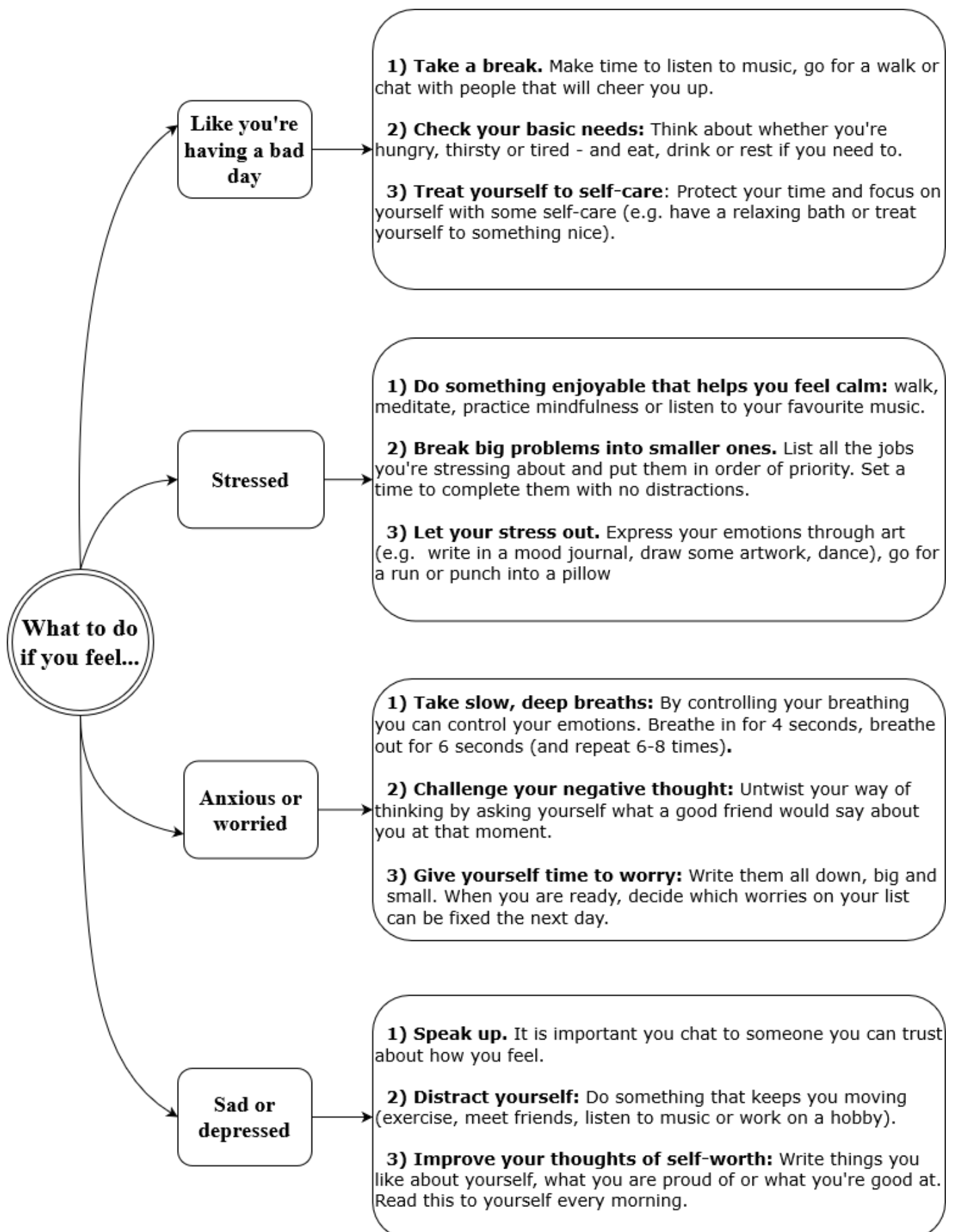
Below are the core domains of a good mental health compass:





# What to do if you are feeling...

Stressed? Anxious? Feeling down or upset after a bad day? Below are our top suggestions for improving your mood.







# What happens when you call for help?

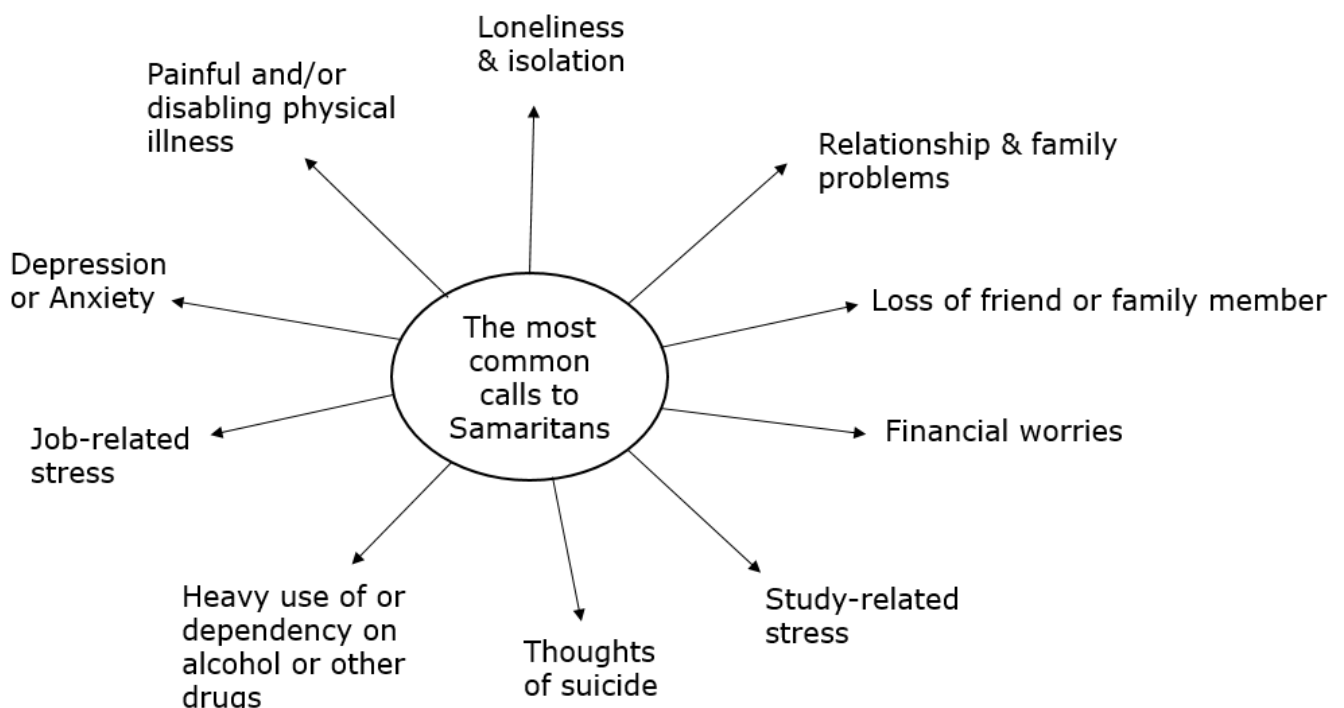
Samaritans provide a safe space to discuss anything that is bothering you, no matter how big or small your issues are. Below is a clear guide on what to expect if you or a friend call Samaritans (free on 116 123).

## 1) A volunteer will answer

Someone will answer with something like "Samaritans, can I help you?"

## 2) You talk, we listen

Below are the most common calls to Samaritans (but call them even if your problem is not presented here):



## 3) Samaritans give you space to be yourself, and they won't tell you what to do.

They will help you explore your feelings and help guide you to your own decisions.

## 4) Safeguarding = making sure you're safe

The information you provide will not be told to anyone else. However, if your health is at risk (such as suicide attempt), it is their job to do something to make sure you are safe.



NO, YOU ARE NOT  
ALONE.

YES, WE FEEL THIS WAY  
SOMETIMES.

NO, YOU WON'T  
ALWAYS FEEL LIKE THIS.

YES, THE WORLD IS A  
BETTER PLACE WITH  
YOU IN IT.



# Contacting the research team: the MRC Cognition & Brain Sciences Unit



## Who are we?

A team of scientists within the Cognition, Emotion & Mental Health Programme. We are based at the MRC-Cognition & Brain Sciences Unit.

To learn more about what we do, scan the QR code to the right and read more about our cutting-edge research.

SCAN ME



## Want to participate in cutting-edge research?

Great! We always welcome volunteers. Please email us and we will guide you to someone who could help.

Note: not all our studies are available to everyone, but we will do our best to help you.

## Do you have a question for us?

We are a friendly team and welcome any questions you may have.

If you have any questions about the Cognition, Emotion & Mental Health Programme at the MRC-CBU, contact Tim

([Tim.Dalgleish@mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:Tim.Dalgleish@mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk))

If you have any questions about this book, contact Kirsty  
([Kirsty.griffiths@mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk](mailto:Kirsty.griffiths@mrc-cbu.cam.ac.uk))

